

Glass Houses 10: Bert Long

by Everett Taasevigen
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Plants, plants and more plants surround Bert L. Long Jr.'s Houston studio and home. The artist's edenic lot also boasts a thriving vegetable garden. Located in Houston's historic Fifth Ward, Bert's 1920s shotgun house was remodeled in 1999-2000 by architect Brett Zamore as his Rice University thesis project. Inside the light-filled structure, Bert's love of vegetation has run riot in every room of the house with even more plants clustered in the windows. The artist absorbs the beauty of nature at work as he watches the birds and butterflies in his yard. In the midst of this verdant splendor, Bert creates his paintings, sculptures and photographs, sharing studio space with his partner, Scottish artist Joan B. Batson. The studio, filled with works in progress and completed, feels as alive as the nature that surrounds it.

{gallery}Glasshouses10{/gallery}

Bert L. Long Jr. was born and raised in Houston's Fifth Ward. He won the Prix de Rome in 1990 and was recently named Artist of the Year by Texas Accountants & Lawyers for the Arts. In 2008, Long installed his epic painting ART/Life, a commission by the City of Houston for the Looscan Neighborhood Library. The artist is currently at work on a multimedia project about the devastation of the Bolivar Peninsula. Long's work is the subject of an upcoming book by Thomas McEvilley.

Everett Taasevigen is a Houston photographer.